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Developing Responsible Citizens in Serbia: The Case of Ecological Citizenship

Mina Petrović

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Abstract

The analysis relies on the concepts of participative democracy and ecological citizenship. The paper discusses dilemmas related to development of (ecological) citizenship in matured democratic systems as well as in post-socialist countries. The main analytical focus is on the challenges of generating environmentally responsible citizens in Serbia. This analysis is based on empirical data obtained through questionnaire research on representative sample for citizens in Serbia (N=1950) in 2010. One of the main conclusions is that dominant model of the citizen in Serbia is „orientation to the state“, since most of the respondents expect from state actors to play a leading role in achieving higher standards and better quality of the environment. For developing a model of the responsible citizens (who would consider the environmental protection to be a civic duty), there is a lack of essential citizens' confidence in institutions, as well as in their fellow citizens.

Keywords: participative democracy, ecological citizenship.

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1. Introduction: The concepts of participative democracy and ecological citizenship

Participatory democracy enters the contemporary political discourse with the concept of responsible management (of the environment), which implies a decrease in the significance of command and control powers of state actors, and an increase in the capacity of their action through a partnership with actors outside the hierarchy of state control (Borzel, 2009), including citizens as a significant partner. This raises the issue of adequacy of citizens' capacity (information, expertise, motivation, support) for partnership action. In a broader sense, responsible management of the environment should reaffirm the concept of dedicated actors who express their concern for the issues of public interest, and raises a complex issue of the relationship between rights (to personal interests) and responsibilities (to the community) in contemporary society (Barry, 2002).

This section discusses briefly main dilemmas related to the concepts of participative democracy and ecological citizenship in matured democratic systems. It can be argued that many environmental issues entered the political field of modern society from the "bottom-up", thanks to the demands formulated by the interested and concerned actors of the civil sector (Wissensburg 2004). In recent decades, however, despite the fact that environmental concern has become universal and generally high, and in most countries the environmental concern is, at least in a certain sense, a part of the political mainstream (Pakulski and Crook, 1998), there is an obvious lack of motivation on the part of citizens to act adequately, both in the public and private domain.

One important reason is identified in the process of depolitization of citizenship (Jagers, 2009), which reduces citizens to clients, and civic virtues to the interest of calculative actors, who pay taxes and expect efficient services, investing their time and energy into politics only when it is necessary to protect and promote their personal interests (Rose, 2000; Beauregard and Bounds, 2000). Since the 1970s and the 1980s, in the spirit of neoliberalism, the notion of social citizenship, which has been developed in order to overcome some of the most serious consequences of modernization in the West, is increasingly understood, due to the standardized approach, as a source of repression against the needs of citizens. This entails a change in the meaning of the concept of citizenship itself; thus the emphasis is shifted from the rights (to safety, protection, etc.) to the responsibility of citizens for personal success, and it is explained by the level of achieved social opportunities that require creativity of individuals on a personal level, primarily in the domain of consumption (Sccery, 2009). But this new concept of participatory democracy does not necessarily bring about positive changes. Political rights, which should enable citizens to act responsibly, are at the same time narrowed, and political involvement boils down to increasing the capacity for accomplishing personal interests. Such an approach indicates inadequacies when it comes to taking care of the public good, since cooperative action is very unlikely in the areas where individual contribution is not crucial, that is when an individual does not believe that others will get involved in a collective action, estimating that immediate personal costs would be higher than potential (collective) gain (Olstrom, 1990). This, again, raises the issue of complex relationship between social integration (reproduction of the social system through face-to-face relationships) and system integration (reproduction of the structures by actors who are separated in time and space). According to Goldbart (1996) sociological classics have also been concerned with this relationship, though they have not reached any final answers. While noting that contemporary societies cannot reproduce themselves solely on the basis of market exchange interests, Durkheim pointed out the necessity for rational intervention of collective agents in the society, expecting an evolutionary shift towards a state-organized secular morality. On the other hand, Marx postulated that

interests and morality coincide (in working class), while Weber gave up his search for a solution². Issues of how to convince the selfish ones, the uninterested, structural resistance and public apathy, these are the questions which remain to be answered by the contemporary social theory (ibid: 4-6).

Renewed interest in citizenship tends to reaffirm this concept as an efficient integrative mechanism, which is a counterbalance to calculative individualism, and thus contributes to resolving the dilemma of collective action by fostering the value (moral) aspect of citizenship (Sccery, 2009). Solutions are sought in encouraging new civic duties and responsibilities, on the one hand, and extending human rights, on the other (Barry, 2002), therefore, between the liberal and the republican type of citizenship. Let us recall the republican concept of citizenship; civic virtues (for example, obedience and courage) are aimed at protecting the community, so the environmental conscience is based on a reciprocal gain within the community. In the liberal tradition, however, citizenship as a contractual relationship between the individual and the state implies that citizens, for responsible behavior towards the community acquire, or may require, certain rights (protection in the private sphere: family, market, civil society) (Wissenburg, 2004). The combination of these approaches seems necessary, since the emphasis on human rights (choice) is unsustainable without a collective framework of arbitration of conflicting interests, and because, on the other hand, the community has to take into account the diversity and interests as the motive for participation of citizens in politics (Lowneds, 1995: 178).

Developing the concept of environmental citizenship, British political scientist Andrew Dobson (2003) endeavors to synthesize these approaches by including the private sphere in the political field. He defines ecological citizenship as an interpersonal relationship between strangers (citizens), based on responsibility, compassion and social justice, that is, on the principle: „My life influences others, to whom I have obligations (whether or not I know them directly)“ (Dobson, 2003: 67; Jagers, 2009: 20). Discussion of environmentally responsible citizenship, therefore, shifts the emphasis from the legal framework (without diminishing its significance) to the normative and identity one (Isin, 2000: 5). Considering that the normative or value aspect becomes essential for reaffirmation of the ecological citizenship, it is relevant to recall Inglehart's (1995) thesis that changes in the value system influence the level of citizens' support for environmental policy, especially their personal willingness to become involved in this domain. In his opinion, generations socialized in the context of material prosperity and strong social care institutions have become bearers of new post-materialist values (that give higher priority to environmental concerns, freedom of thought, humanization of society, influence of citizens and ideas, rather than money). For Inglehart, this is the key to understanding the fact that there is no decline in support for environmental issues and policies in developed countries, despite a significant decrease in pollution of the immediate environment (due to remedying standard environmental problems)³. Inglehart identified the bearers of post-materialist values not only in terms of generations, but also as more educated and urban segment of the population, which is at the forefront of the environmental support and activism, as corroborated by the research of other authors (Rohrschneider, 1990; Rootes, 1997; Dalton, 2005). It has also been found that, among people who are environmentally active, post-materialists are more prepared to get involved in political actions (demonstrations, petitions), while materialists prefer politically neutral activities, such as waste recycling and the like (Inglehart, 1995). It is a fact, however, that in developed countries post-

² As to the Goldblat, "the classical social theorists were historically late enough to witness not simply the escape of modern societies from their organic constraints, but also their dynamic capacity to transform the natural word as well. Yet they were also too early to register fully the implications of those transformations." (ibid : 5).

³ Based on the findings of the World Value Survey in the first half of the 1990s, these results have been contrasted with the fact that the level of expressed personal support for environmental policy in less developed countries correlated with the level of actual contamination of the immediate environment (Inglehart, 1995).

materialist values become the mainstream over time, diffusing through the fabric of social institutions and down the stratification ladder, which diminishes the explanatory relevance of these socio-demographic characteristics (Brand, 1997). On the other hand, some materialist values (for example: peace and order, fight against crime, economic growth and stability, fight against price rise, and so on) remain stable values of Western societies (Cifrić 1998), which supports the thesis about pluralization and individualization of values and about domination of mixed value types (Pavlović 2009).

The development of ecological citizenship is a kind of (socio-political) ideal which presupposes evolutionary strengthening of the network system of relations, corporate and pluralist democracy, as well as the standard of living that enables pluralization of values. In this sense, Inglehart believes that a materialistic orientation in developed Western countries is not primarily driven by concern about the existential needs, and suggests that it might be better to contrast the value of safety with the quality of life, instead of contrasting materialistic with post-materialistic values (Inglehart, 1995). The question is, however, how do societies, with authoritarian legacy and without a developed tradition of institutionalization of relations between individuals/civic associations and the state, as is the case of most post-socialist societies, position themselves in relation to the presented idea of ecological citizenship? The following (second) section is devoted to that issue, including the contextual analysis of profiling environmentally responsible citizens in Serbia. The third section furthers the discussion by analyzing empirical data obtained through questionnaire research on representative sample for citizens in Serbia (N=1950) in 2010. Finally, in the concluding part, the research findings are summarized from the perspective of responsible (ecological) citizenship as starting analytical concept.

2. Ecological citizenship in post-socialist societies

Total absence of liberal democracy during the socialism has led to treating citizens as subjects rather than holders of civil rights, as well as to an apolitical and relatively low activism of citizens. Citizens' associations have been established, financed and controlled by the state and the Communist Party, so they rarely entered the field of politics, while contacts with public servants took place without institutional mediation (Carmin, 2010). In the post-socialist period, the notion of citizenship, as well as of the ecological citizenship, is formed slowly and mainly „top-down“, through transition of the political system, by enacting laws and shaping institutions following the pattern of liberal (participatory) democracy, which in reality does not have a developed foothold in either state or civil sector of post-socialist societies (Borzel, 2009).

Renewed interest in environmental issues in both state and civil sector, as well as the affirmation of citizens' participation, have been directly instigated by the EU accession process⁴. The immediate results, however, are primarily formal, concerning basically adoption of the new content of specific policies. To make changes in the domain of administrative structures (jurisdictions which are distributed horizontally among the ministries and vertically among the different levels of governance) and the mode of regulation (cooperation with non-state actors in shaping the policy), it takes far more time and prerequisites. One of the important reasons is found in the paradox that the EU, along with the affirmation of partnership in environmental management, also encourages (re)establishing and strengthening of the capacity of state (democratic) institutions, in order to eradicate (inherited) arbitrariness in decision-making (Borzel 2008, 226).

⁴ Environmental management is one of the entry sections which discusses relevant social institutions, including the legislative framework of establishing and operation of civil society organizations, accessibility of citizens to information, public participation in decision-making, etc. (Carmin and VanDeveer, 2003).

In many Central and Eastern European countries (CIE), shaping of the civil sector bottom-up is characterized by professionalization of civil society organizations (CSOs), directed primarily towards obtaining funds through projects, resulting in a neglect of their representative function, of encouraging and developing participatory skills of citizens (Fagan, 2010). Consequently, there is a phenomenon of „civil society without the citizens“ (Andreeva et al, 2005), that is, the citizens remain immersed in their personal problems and social networks, not trusting the majority of civil and political institutions (Howard, 2003). Although a high level of environmental awareness can be observed among the citizens of (post)socialist countries, it is not accompanied by greater civic activism. Opening up towards the developmental paradigm of the West is considered to be an important aspect of the modernization of these societies, of achieving the objectives of a good life and promoting the value pluralism. This has been confirmed to some extent by studies which have indicated a surprisingly high level of post-materialism in the former Soviet Union countries (Duch & Taylor 1993, 1994), although the level of environmental protection and the standard of living are considerably lower than in the Western Europe. However, comparative European studies have shown that values such as trust, tolerance and political activism are far less present in the post-socialist societies, which has been associated not only with the overall socio-economic insecurity, but also with the legacy of the previous authoritarian regime (Inglehart and Baker 2000). Although in these countries post-materialists also give greater support for environmental policy than the materialists, the strength of connection between these variables is much weaker than in developed European countries (ibid.). Long-term suppression (during socialism) and thwarting (during the transition difficulties) of individual consumption, accompanied by the absence of a stable system of social care, question the willingness of social actors to change their daily routine, both in the domain of consumption and political/civic behavior (environmental support and activism); that is, it is a fertile ground for reducing the status of citizen to the status of consumer. The newly enacted legal regulations, therefore, remain without power that could give full meaning to participatory democracy, while the political elite promotes consumerism uncritically and presents it as a form of progress and the basis of legitimacy of the new order (Bockok, 2001: 111).

Slow and long-lasting transition to a democratic parliamentary system and market economy, as well as the hardship of transformation processes, are directly reflected on the process of shaping citizenship in Serbia. Long-lasting economic difficulties and relatively closed political structures determine the significance of environmental issues on the political agenda, that is, the level of environmental activism in the society. Although the structure of political opportunities, as well as the specific configuration of resources, institutional arrangements and historical legacy that determine civic activism (Cisar, 2010), gradually change with the EU accession process, slowness and even uncertainty of this process in Serbia diminish the anticipated positive effects.

It can be argued that the transformation processes in Serbia gained prominence only after 2000, but that the political elite still tends to retain significant control over economic resources, which further slows down the process of privatization and attracting foreign investment, thus not contributing to more efficient resolution of the problems of unemployment and poverty. The relationship of state actors to the civil sector, as well as the inability of actors in this sector to induce societal changes, can be illustrated rather well by the fact that enactment of the law regulating the work of CSOs has been delayed until 2009. The increasing number of CSOs, influenced by funding from abroad, as a typical post-socialist phenomenon, has also been prominent in Serbia, but due to a considerable focus on strengthening the state institutions themselves (Fagan, 2010), this increase has not contributed significantly to the development of civic activism.

New regulations on environmental management instigated by approaching the EU are implemented extremely slowly, that is, inadequately, especially related to the principle of citizens'

participation. According to previous research findings, citizens saw political party structures as the most important "channels" of influence (32%) at the local level, followed by the municipal council (26%), and personal connections and corruption (22%). The decision-making "channels" through local communities (7%), SCO's (1%), and citizen petitions (0.8%) were ranked as the least influential (Vujovic, 2004: 173). The low citizen participation has been associated with a lack of trust in political institutions, limited availability of information, as well as the negative impact of widespread unemployment (around 20%) and poverty (with more than 20% of population in financial risk of poverty) (ibid). Therefore, change in the structure of political opportunities is slow and requires a thorough decomposition of the existing system of power distribution, model of governance and responsible behavior of citizens, both in the public and private sphere. Based on empirical research findings, the next section discusses some dimensions of ecological citizenship in the context of Serbian society.

3. Empirical research findings: Dimensions of ecological citizenship in Serbian society

According to previously discussed conceptual and contextual framework, the general research hypothesis is that prevalence of unemployment and materialistic values, as well as specific political culture (inherited low level of civic activism, high expectation from and low trust in state at the same time, etc.) determine low level of citizens' support to environmental policy and low level of their (environmental) civic activism. This general presumption has been specified into several, as follows:

H1: The level of environmental concern is universally high and with no difference among the citizens of different values (materialistic vs. post-materialistic).

H2: The support to environmental policy is presumed to be lower than expressed environmental concern.

H3: The citizens of post-materialist value orientation give higher support to environmental policy than bearers of materialistic and mixed values.

H4: Taking the lack of tradition in civic activism, generally low level of environmental activism is expected. It is presumed to be lower than observed level of general support to environmental policy.

H5: The environmental activism is higher among post-materialists than other value types.

H6: Education and material status have positive correlation with the level of environmental activism.

H7: The level of trust in institutions and disposable information about ecological problems are in positive correlation with environmental activism.

H8: Age is expected to be in negative correlation with environmental activism for two reasons, demographic (as level of activism generally decreases with age) and generational (due to authoritarian socialization context of older generations during socialism).

H9: Higher level of environmental activism among women is expected as they are presumed to be more sensitive to ecological issues.

These hypothesis were tested on data obtained through questionnaire technique conducted on representative sample (N=1950) for citizens in Serbia, in 2010.⁵ The methods of descriptive and analytical statistics are applied in data processing and analysis presented in the following text. Descriptive statistics is used in presenting the frequencies of the observed characteristics. Analytical statistics is applied by using

⁵ Research „Attitudes on environmental protection at the local level“ was conducted by Institute for Sociological Research, Faculty of Philosophy University of Belgrade, in cooperation with Steady Conference of Municipalities and Towns. It was financially supported by UNDP and SIDA.

χ^2 -test for measuring the level of statistical importance of the relations between observed variables, while contingency coefficient (C) is used for measuring the strength of such relations. Finally, for measuring the separate impact that hypothetically chosen independent variables have on citizens' environmental activism the model of binary logistic regression model is employed.

3.1 Data analysis

Perception of environmental problems as personal or social/collective responsibility is one of the key aspects of environmentally responsible actors. Most of the respondents, 55,9%, agrees with the statement that citizens' behavior is the main source of environmental degradation in their local community. They perceive their neighbours and fellow citizens mostly as indifferent (47,6%) or irresponsible (29,3%) towards the environment. However, only 28,7% of respondents consider that they as individuals, by specific way of life and behavior, have significant influence on the quality of environment (majority thinks it is only of certain influence), which refers to the low level of personal responsibility. Both findings indicate inadequate presumptions for resolving the problem of citizens' collective action, which is less probable in cases when individual contribution seems negligible and/or when individuals have no trust that others will join the action, thus calculating personal costs as higher than potential (collective) benefit (Olstrom 1990). Therefore, it is of no surprise that more than 80% of respondents expect state actors, either at central or local level, to be the key actors of successful environmental protection. Having in mind that post-socialist transformation should be considered as transformation from dominantly passive to considerably more active society (Etzioni 1992), such findings might be related to the inherited passivity of citizens and their expectation that changes should be introduced from above ("top down").

High expectation from the state raises a question about citizens' willingness to support environmental policy measures. Many researches consider this dimension as crucial in operationalizing the concept of ecological citizenship, taking the readiness for paying associated taxes as its key segment (Jagers 2009). Our findings indicate relatively low level of respondents' willingness to accept inevitable costs for environmental protection and to support the related policy measures. Namely, only 8, 2% of respondents do not support the general statement: „Government should decrease environmental degradation, but that should not be the cost for citizens “(while 65, 2% agrees). However, more individualistic attitude: „I am ready to accept higher prices for the purpose of environment protection and improvement“ is more often refused (not agreed) than accepted (agreed) - 35, 6% vs. 24, 7% (Table 1). It is interesting to note that there are more respondents who does not support the first statement or partly support it (34, 8%) than those who completely support the second (24, 7%), which is opposite to Inglehart's findings (according to which respondents are more willing to accept more general attitude that citizens should pay for environmental policy than to support higher prices) (Inglehart 1995). Such findings might be connected to still undeveloped citizens' awareness as tax payers in Serbia, in other words, with the fact that high expectation from the state institutions is not sufficiently connected with tax system as a main source of budget income, particularly in the context of significant transitional poverty. The fact that observed level of respondents' support to environmental policy is lower than expressed level of environmental concern (for immediate problems: degradation of water, air, and soil) (Table 1) confirms the starting presumption about the relation between these dimensions, and is typical contradiction in contemporary societies (Brand, 2010; Hannigan, 2006).

Value	Concern – about degradation of air, water and soil			Support – agreement with statement 1*			Support – agreement with statement 2**		
	No concern	Small concern	Big concern	Do not agree	Partly agree	Agree	Do not agree	Partly agree	Agree
Mat	2,0%	14,6%	83,4%	7,5%	27,4%	65,1%	42,9%	40,1%	16,9%
Mix	1,3%	10,6%	88,1%	7,6%	25,6%	66,8%	35,1%	38,9%	25,9%
Post-mat	1,3%	10,1%	88,6%	11%	28,2%	60,8%	27,0%	41,5%	31,5%
Total	1,5%	11,5%	86,9%	8,2%	26,6%	65,2%	35,6%	39,7%	24,7%
Test χ^2	$\chi^2 = 7.685; p > 0.05$			$\chi^2 = 6.321; p > 0.05$			$\chi^2 = 33.798; p < 0.001$		

*Statement1: "Government should decrease environmental degradation, but that should not be the cost for citizens"

**Statement2: "I am ready to accept higher prices for protection and improvement of environment"

Table 1.

Values in Table 1 represent respondents' ecological concern and support to environmental policy by value profile

In accordance with our expectation, the level of environmental concern does not vary significantly depending on respondents' value profile⁶ (which is characterised by predominance of mix value type, 54,7%, followed by respondents that opt consistently for materialistic values, 26%, and those who opt for post-materialistic values, 19,6%). However, data confirm that values make statistically significant difference when individual support to environmental policy is in question (but only measured by second statement). So, respondents with post-materialistic and value mixed profile tend to give more support to higher prices for the purpose of environmental protection (the differences according the value profiles are significant but not strong, $C=0.136$, as confirmed in other research of post-socialist countries) (Table 1).

Pro-environmental citizens' activism is observed through the list of activities in private and public sphere. Regarding the private sphere, it includes activities linked to the way of life (life style), while the activities that are directly or indirectly related to public sphere have political connotation (Stern 2000). According to the number of activities practiced by respondents in last three years (Table 2), there is relatively low incidence of either type of activities (writing of petitions is the most common activity in the public sphere and garbage selection in private, with relatively equal share of respondents).

The presented data confirm that respondents are not willing to change consumption habits (that were not so much suppressed during socialism as during the 1990s in Serbia). Also, it is important to note the rare incidents of respondents' support to CSOs, as well as the rarity of their contacts with local authorities. The first fact refers that CSOs cannot count on citizens' financial support, which is an important precondition for their autonomous acting (Fagan 2005), while the second points to the citizens' alienation from the local authorities.

Next question relates to the reasons why respondents are not ready to practice more pro-environmental civic activities. They most often report the lack of time (54%) as the main reason, while other reasons like lack of information (19%), low trust that they can accomplish anything (11%) and lack of interest (9%) are less common. Therefore, there is a predominance of individual reasons, which is often in contemporary societies, either due to primacy of economic (existential) problems and necessity to invest a

⁶ Respondents' value profiles are based on Inglehart's 4-item Materialist (national order and price control) /Postmaterialist (citizens' participation and freedom of speech) values battery (Inglehart, 1990: 76)

lot of time and energy in their solving, which is more frequent in post-socialist countries (Howard, 2003), or because of other preoccupations in private life that occupies more and more energy (as in developed countries) (Kymlicka and Norman, 1995). However, our data also show a significant share of reasons related to institutional context (lack of trust in civic activism or lack of sufficient information – almost 30%), which is typical for post-socialist societies (Carmin, 2010).

Activities	%*
In public sphere	
Writing petitions	28,7%
Taking part in street protests	12,2%
Giving financial support to environmental CSOs	9,3%
Meetings with local authorities	8,5%
In private sphere	
Dumps election	21,1%
Taking part in environmental campaigns	16,3%
Decreasing use of private transport	15,4%
Boycot of the goods produced by environmentally irresponsible companies	15,3%

*Total is not 100% due to multiple choices

Table 2.

Values in Table 2. represent the distribution of practicing pro-environmental activities among the respondents

Other data indirectly confirm the importance of institutional reasons. Thus, the majority of respondents (65%) does not know even if there is an office responsible for environment in their local community, also, that they are very badly informed about environment (63%) as, in respondents' view, information are unavailable (24%) or unreliable (27%). Further, the vast majority of respondents (82%) has never heard about the citizens' initiatives related to environmental issues in their local community, while the minority that has heard about them thinks they had no positive effects (62%). Respondents do not have trust in CSO sector (38% has no or little trust while 37% has limited trust), while only every fifth of them believes that CSOs are important actors in environment protection. Based on respondents' trust in work of local authorities and CSOs on environmental issues, and on the level of expressed confidence that respondents have in different information sources, the index of citizens' trust in institutions was calculated. Its values show very low trust of citizens, as 73,2% of respondents is with the lowest values while only 3,1% has the highest.

Based on the number of pro-environmental civic activities practiced by respondents during the last three years an index of practiced environmental civic activism was calculated (Table 3). Besides that, an index of intended civic activism was also calculated according to the answers related to the respondents' readiness to practice the same activities in the near future (next year) (Table 3). Comparison of these indices shows, surprisingly, lower values of intended civic activism, which suggests that respondents are losing motivation to be active. Finally, an index of potential civic activism was calculated by taking the

respondents whose main reasons not to be active in the coming year were related to institutional obstacles (lack of information and trust in effectiveness of civic activism) and by adding them to those who intend to be active.

Type of activism	Position on the index	
	Inactive	Pro-active
Practiced	55,6%	44,4%
Intended	84,4%	15,6%
Potential	55,9%	44,1%
Practiced and potential	76,1%	23,9%

Table 3.

Values in Table 3. represent indices of citizens' activism: practised, intended, potential

Calculated values indicate almost the same level of civic activism measured by practiced and potential activism (Table 3), which suggests that institutional reasons have destimulated some of previously active respondents in answering about their future intentions related to environmental activism. This might be partly confirmed by positive, although not high, correlation between practiced and potential activism ($C = 0.288$; $p < 0.001$). In order to get more consistent data on citizens' activism, these indices (practiced and potential) are summarized (Tabela 3), in other words, the number of active respondents is calculated by adding of respondents with positive values on both indices.⁷ According to this calculation, only 23, 9% respondents might be considered as environmentally active.

In order to get a more precise insight into the extent in which respondents' support to environmental policy, trust in institutions and values (separately) determine their environmental civic activism, the binary logistic regression model is employed. As dependent variable, environmental civic activism is measured with the explained combination of practiced and potential activism (Table 3). Besides the already mentioned independent variables, the impacts of several socio-demographic variables as independent ones are also tested according to our starting hypothesis. So, the model⁸ consists of: **dependent variable:** Y- dichotomous variable of **environmental civic activism**, in which the observed category (*i*) embraces all cases that have positive score on the employed index of environmental activism, while the reference category (*j*) includes all inactive cases.

β_0 - constant

Seven independent variables:

⁷ An approach that adds respondents with consistent answers on several dimensions is validated by the fact that many research have referred to inconsistent environmental behavior, even among the persons with strong pro-environmental values, which is often connected to consumerist life styles (Brand, 2010).

⁸ Model of regression has the following form:

$\text{Log } P_i/P_j = Y = \hat{\alpha}_0 + \hat{\alpha}_1 X_1 + \hat{\alpha}_2 X_2 + \hat{\alpha}_3 X_3 + \hat{\alpha}_4 X_4 + \hat{\alpha}_5 X_5 + \hat{\alpha}_6 X_6 + \hat{\alpha}_7 X_7$

where: Y-environmental activism, $\hat{\alpha}_0$ - constant

Model regularly distributes 75,9% cases, with the adapted coefficient of determination 0,181 (Nagelkerke R^2)

X₁- SEX (dichotomous variable, mails as reference category, presumed higher activism of females);

X₂- AGE (categorical variable, aged over 55 as reference category, presumed higher activism of younger cohorts)

X₃- EDUCATION (EDUCAT)⁹ (categorical variable, university education as reference category, presumed higher activism of those with university education);

X₄-MATERIAL STATUS (MATSTAT) ¹⁰ (dichotomous variable, cases without worries for basic needs as reference category, presumed higher activism of reference category);

X₄-INFORMATION (INFO) (dichotomous variable, well informed as reference category, presumed higher activism of well informed);

X₅- TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS (TRUST) ¹¹ (dichotomous variable, cases with higher trust as reference category, presumed higher activism of reference category);

X₆- SUPPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY (SUPPORT)¹² (categorical variable, cases that fully agree with higher prices as reference category, presumed higher activism of reference category presumed higher activism of reference category);

X₇ - VALUES (categorical variable, cases with consistent post-materialistic values as reference category, presumed higher activism of reference category).

Tested socio-demographic variables have no uniform effects. Contrary to our expectation, *sex and material status* are without significant contribution to the model while the *education* is confirmed as one of the variables with the strongest prediction of environmental civic activism. Namely, cases with the elementary or secondary education have more than two times less probability of pro-active behavior in comparison to those with university education. *Age* shows partial impact, as higher probability of activism in comparison to reference category (those aged over 55) has only younger middle age cohort.

Support to environmental policy and information are variables with the significant contribution to the model, therefore, respondents that give support have 2,5 higher probability for environmental civic activism in comparison to those who gives no or limited support, while well informed respondents have 2 times higher probability than those badly informed. As regarding the *values*, the higher probability of environmental civic activism among the respondents with post-materialistic values is confirmed, as those with materialistic or mixed values have 1, 6 and 1, 9 (respectively) less probability to be active. *Trust in institutions*, however, does not have statistically significant contribution to the model, which might be related

⁹ Measured by the highest level of accomplished education.

¹⁰ Measured by subjective statements.

¹¹ Based on the presented index of citizens' trust in institutions

¹² Measured by the level of agreement with the statement „I am ready to accept higher prices for protection and improvement of environment“ (Table 2).

to universally high mistrust among respondents, but it could be also presumed that certain respondents are active in order to change the institutions they do not trust.

	B	Sig.*	Exp(B)
SEX	,210	,236	1,234
AGE		,103	
18-34 (1)	,548	,033	1,731
35-54 (2)	,381	,141	1,464
EDUCAT		,000	
element (1)	-,755	,023	,470
second (2)	-,940	,000	,391
MATSTAT	,222	,247	1,249
INFO	,703	,000	2,020
TRUST	,316	,103	1,372
VALUES		,015	
mat (1)	-,484	,050	,616
mix (2)	-,639	,004	,528
SUPPORT	,893	,000	2,441
Constant	-1,417	,000	,242

*Significant at $p < 0,05$

Table 4.

Values in Table 4. represent the results of binary logistic regression model (environmental civic activism)

4. Conclusions

Great environmental concern of Serbian citizens is not accompanied by a significant support for the environmental protection policy, and even less so by direct involvement of citizens in these issues. Although respondents perceive the problem of insufficiently responsible behavior of other citizens, they rarely feel personal responsibility. Lack of confidence in other actors (in both civil and state sector), as well as an inherited civic passivity and high expectations from the state sector, on the other hand, prevent environmental concern and pro-ecological awareness of the respondents from generating behavior of dedicated citizens. Inherited high expectations from the state are especially obvious when it comes to the support for environmental policies, financing of which is not connected with the system of taxation. It has been confirmed that representatives of post-materialist values give greater support for environmental protection measures, and that they also demonstrate greater civic activism. If we recall Inglehart's findings that post-materialist values promote participatory skills, and that activism of materialists and post-materialists is not the same in kind, the question of the extent and depth of adopting the post-materialist values is not irrelevant for the society in Serbia.

One typology of citizens' behavior towards the environment includes the following five models: 1. Ecological orientation as a personal project; 2. Environmental protection as a civic duty; 3. Orientation to

the system or the state; 4. Indifference (the attitude that environmental concerns should not burden the citizens, although the existence of environmental problems is not questioned); 5. Denial of environmental problems, and even the need for any kind of citizens' involvement (Brand, 1997: 211). The analyzed data show almost total absence of the first and the fifth model, but also a low level of the second. It could be concluded that in Serbia the dominant model of the citizen is „orientation to the state“, since most of the respondents expect from state actors, both on the national as well as the local level, to play a leading role in achieving higher standards and better quality of the environment. It has to be added, however, that in order to develop a model of the responsible citizens (who would consider the environmental protection to be a civic duty), there is a lack of essential citizens' confidence in institutions, as well as in their fellow citizens. Namely, the majority of respondents in Serbia pointed to the “indifference” model of citizens' behavior. Such indifference, however, is not associated with the calculative model of the citizen-consumer, although in the absence of the tradition of civic activism it is very likely that, with the rise in the standard of living, this model will be formed. However, perceived indifference stems, for the time being, primarily from preoccupation of citizens with economic problems and from the habit to overcome deficiencies of the social system by atomized and non-institutional strategies, which contribute cumulatively to degradation of the environment, as well as to usurpation of the environment as the public good on the part of citizens.

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